

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 34-52, 78-96, and 122-132 are pending in the present application.

Claims 9-33, 53-77, and 97-121 are canceled. Claims 1-6, 8, 34-42, 45-50, 52, 78-86, 89-94, 96, and 122-130 are amended. Support for the amendments to these claims may be found in the current specification on page 8, line 24, to page 10, line 12, which describes agents performing roles autonomously on behalf of users, where agents are autonomous or semi-autonomous software being executed on data processing systems as described in the present specification and as known in the art. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102, Alleged Anticipation of claims 1-8, 34-52, 78-96, and 122-132

The Office Action rejects claims 1-13, 15-17, 22-27, 29, 34-57, 59-61, 66-71, 73, 78-105, 110-115, 117, 122-132 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by *Conklin et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,141,653). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Conklin teaches a system for interactive multivariate negotiations over a network. Sponsor participants create communities where buyer participants may search for seller participants. See col. 17, line 56, to col. 18, line 17. Seller participants may create Web pages using authoring tools provided by sponsor participants, who may then register sponsor Web pages and seller Web pages with search engines. See col. 19, lines 14-56. Buyer participants may find the sponsor Web page and, using a Web browser, search for sellers. See col. 19, line 57, to col. 20, line 4. Buyer processes and seller processes alert buyers and sellers, respectively, to pending offers so that the participants may negotiate. See col. 19, lines 28-37.

While the interactive system of *Conklin* does serve to bring buyers and sellers together in a community and provides a centralized negotiations engine, the system requires a great deal of work on the part of the participants. Buyers must still search for sponsors using standard search engines. Buyers must also search for sellers using the sponsor Web sites. Sellers must still create Web pages, even though the sponsor processes provide authoring tools. Buyers and seller must also negotiate by making, reviewing, and responding to offers.

More particularly, the multivariate negotiations engine system of *Conklin* centralizes all of the processing necessary to provide the interactive and iterative system. Participants of the interactive system of *Conklin* must perform all functions using a Web browser. *Conklin* states:

Multivariate negotiations engine system **02** contains all the software needed to create sponsored communities, communicate with sponsors, and with all participants and store the results. Each sponsor or participant only needs a standard Internet browser such as those commonly available from Netscape Corporation or Microsoft Corporation, among others, and a commonly available desktop computer or other terminal, workstation, or computer to activate the browser over any commonly available link to the Internet. Typically, these browsers are distributed free of charge by their suppliers.

Conklin, col. 17, lines 23-33. Thus, the steps of searching for sponsors, searching for sellers, making offers, responding to offers, creating Web pages, etc. are all performed by human participants.

In contradistinction, the present invention provides autonomous agents that perform functions based on roles. A sponsor autonomous agent lists itself with directory services so that it may be discovered by buyers and sellers. The sponsor autonomous agent also receives advertisements from sellers and provides seller information to consumers autonomously. A buyer or consumer autonomous agent finds contact information for one or more matchmakers from a directory service, autonomously requests vendor information for a particular category of products, and receives a list of vendors for the particular category of products from at least one matchmaker. A seller autonomous agent autonomously contacts a matchmaker and obtains advertisement content and format requirements, autonomously creates an advertisement complying with advertisement content and format requirements for the matchmaker; and autonomously provides the advertisement to the matchmaker.

The present specification states:

Each agent **408-424**, whether a matchmaker, vendor, or consumer as alluded to above, is a data processing system acting at the behest of a human "owner." The agent's interactions with its owner may take on any form or degree of autonomy -- i.e., the owner may preprogram the agent's

routine actions such that the owner needs to interact with the agent often, seldom, or never.

Thus, the claimed invention provides autonomous agents, which are data processing systems with software modules that perform functions based on the roles of their human owners. *Conklin* does not teach or suggest an agent that takes on any form or degree of autonomy. In *Conklin*, a human participant is assumed to perform all of the functions associated with his or her role.

More particularly, independent claims 34, 78, and 122 recite a consumer autonomous agent that finds contact information for one or more matchmakers from a directory service, autonomously requests vendor information for a particular category of products, and receives a list of vendors for the particular category of products from at least one matchmaker. *Conklin* does not teach or suggest a consumer autonomous agent as recited in independent claims 34, 78, and 122. Independent claims 42, 86, and 130 recite a seller autonomous agent that autonomously contacts a matchmaker and obtains advertisement content and format requirements, autonomously creates an advertisement complying with advertisement content and format requirements for the matchmaker; and autonomously provides the advertisement to the matchmaker. *Conklin* does not teach or suggest a seller autonomous agent as recited in claims 42, 86, and 130. In addition, independent claims 1, 45, and 89 recite a matchmaker autonomous agent that registers with at least one of a plurality of directory services and receiving advertisements from a plurality of vendor autonomous agents, wherein the plurality of vendor autonomous agents obtained the identity and contact information of the matchmaker autonomous agent from the at least one of a plurality of directory services and wherein the advertisements comprise an informational format designated by the matchmaker, as well as a seller autonomous agent and a consumer autonomous agent. *Conklin* does not teach or suggest a matchmaker autonomous agent, a seller autonomous agent, and a consumer autonomous agent as recited, in combination, in claims 1, 45, and 89.

Since claims 2-8, 35-41, 43, 44, 46-52, 79-85, 87, 88, 90-96, 123-129, 131, and 132 depend from claims 1, 34, 42, 45, 78, 86, 89, 122, and 130, the same distinctions between *Conklin* and the invention recited in claims 1, 34, 42, 45, 78, 86, 89, 122, and 130 apply for these claims. Additionally, claims 2-8, 35-41, 43, 44, 46-52, 79-85, 87, 88,

90-96, 123-129, 131, and 132 recite other additional combinations of features not suggested by the reference.

Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-10, 11-13, 15-17, 22-27, 29, 34-57, 59-61, 66-71, 73, 78-102, 103-105, 110-115, 117, 122-132 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 has been overcome.

Furthermore, *Conklin* does not teach, suggest, or give any incentive to make the needed changes to reach the presently claimed invention. Absent the Office Action pointing out some teaching or incentive to modify the interactive system of *Conklin* to employ autonomous agents, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be led to modify *Conklin* to reach the present invention when the reference is examined as a whole. Absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive to modify *Conklin* in this manner, the presently claimed invention can be reached only through an improper use of hindsight using Applicants' disclosure as a template to make the necessary changes to reach the claimed invention.

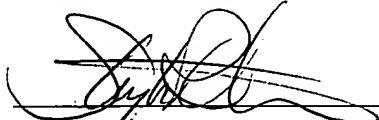
II. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the prior art of record and is now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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